

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-08 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-15 EURE-00 /090 W

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P R 091754Z DEC 76

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8606

INFO USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY MAPUTO

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 LONDON 19917

GENEVA FOR WISNER

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, RH, UK

SUBJECT: BRITISH PRESS ON GENEVA TALKS, DECEMBER 9

1. THE GENEVA CONFERENCE IS WELL COVERED IN THE BRITISH PRESS TODAY. THE MAIN STORIES ARE IAN SMITH'S INTRANSIGENT STATEMENT ON ARRIVAL IN GENEVA AND AN ALLEGED SECRET MESSAGE FROM DR. KISSINGER TO THE AFRICAN PRESIDENTS WHICH IS SAID TO HAVE ENRAGED THE AFRICANS.

2. AN EDITORIAL EXAMINES THE ROLE BRITAIN IS PREPARED TO PLAY NOW IN DECIDING THE DIRECTION OF SOUTHERN AFRICAN POLITICS AND SAYS THE SUBJECT WILL BE ON THE AGENDA WHEN DR. KISSINGER COMES TO LONDON TOMORROW.

3. TIMES DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT DAVID SPANIER IN GENEVA: "AN INTRANSIGENT STATEMENT ON ARRIVAL HERE BY MR. IAN SMITH...AND HOSTILE COMMENT FROM AFRICAN LEADERSULUS BAELY FT#

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THERHODESIAN CONFERENCE.... DELEGATES

SEE LITTLE CHANCE OF AN AGREEMENT BY THE TARGET DATE OF DECEMBER 20. THE BEST THAT LEADING DELEGATES CAN SEE IS A 50-50 CHANCE OF AVOIDING A COLLAPSE. WHAT HAS ESCAPED NOTICE...IS THAT IF THE CONFERENCE FAILS TO MEET ITS DEADLINE AND IS ADJOURNED...THE DATE SET FOR THE INDEPENDENCE OF RHODESIA...WOULD ALSO LAPSE.... MR. SMITH'S BASIC POINT (IS) THAT IF THE KISSINGER PLAN WAS TO BE CHANGED, AS ALL THE AFRICANS ARE INSISTING, THEN THIS WOULD CREATE A NEW SITUATION."

4. DAILY MAIL CORRESPONDENT JOHN DICKIE IN GENEVA: "A SECRET MESSAGE FROM DR. KISSINGER TO AFRICAN PRESIDENTS, ATTEMPTING TO WATER DOWN ARRANGEMENTS FOR MAJORITY RULE IN RHODESIA, BROUGHT THE GENEVA TALKS TO THE BRINK OF COLLAPSE LAST NIGHT. THE LETTER FROM (KISSINGER) DROPPED A DIPLOMATIC BOMBSHELL BY STATING THAT IT WOULD BE 'UNREALISTIC' FOR THE AFRICAN NATIONALISTS IN THE PATRIOTIC FRONT TO INSIST ON MAJORITY RULE DURING THE TRANSITION TO INDEPENDENCE.... (IT) OFFERED A NEW LIFELINE FOR... SMITH.... BOTH...KAUNDA...AND...NYERERE...ARE SHOCKED BY DR. KISSINGER RENEGING ON ALL HIS PREVIOUS COMMITMENTS AND ARE PLANNING TO APPEAL TO...CALLAGHAN BEFORE HE SEES (KISSINGER) IN LONDON TOMORROW. THEY HAVE CONFIDENTIAL LETTERS, I CAN DISCLOSE, FROM DR. KISSINGER...ASSERTING THAT THE BLACK AFRICANS IN RHODESIA WILL HAVE A DOMINANT ROLE IN THE TRANSITIONAL PERIOD TO INDEPENDENCE.... NOW DR. KISSINGER APPEARS TO BE PLAYING INTO THE HANDS OF... SMITH BY PUTTING OFF THE AFRICANS FROM HAVING A MAJOR VOICE IN THE RUNNING OF RHODESIA UNTIL ACTUAL INDEPENDENCE."

5. DAILY TELEGRAPH EDITORIAL: "THE BATTLE BEING FOUGHT

NOTE BY OC/T: SECTION 1 OF 2 LONDON 19917; #PARA. 3. AS RECEIVED.

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OUT OVER THE TABLE IN GENEVA AND ACROSS THE BORDERS IN RHODESIA IS ABOUT THE DIRECTION OF SOUTHERN AFRICAN POLITICS IN THE NEXT DECADE. WILL SOUTHERN AFRICA BE PRO WESTERN OR WILL IT ACT IN SUPPORT OF THE SOVIET UNION? PART OF THE ANSWER LIES WITH THE ROLE BRITAIN IS PREPARED TO TAKE NOW.... WHEN DR. KISSINGER COMES TO LONDON TOMORROW...THIS SUBJECT WILL CLEARLY BE ON THE AGENDA.... A BRITISH COMMITMENT OF THE KIND ENVISAGED, HOWEVER, WOULD ONLY WORK IF DEVELOPMENTS IN RHODESIA WERE GOING IN A WAY BOTH BLACKS AND WHITES FOUND ACCEPTABLE. AS SOON AS THEY WENT WRONG FOR EITHER SIDE THERE WOULD BE AN IMMEDIATE RISK OF MILITARY ACTION, ON ONE SIDE OR THE OTHER, WHICH NO BRITISH COMMANDER COULD POSSIBLY ENDORSE. IN SHORT, AS WE HAVE SAID BEFORE, DEFENSE IS THE CRUX. I TAKING ANY FRESH INITIATIVE THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT HAS TO THINK THROUGH THE CONSEQUENCES OF ASSUMING FURTHER RESPONSIBILITY WITHOUT REAL POWER.... IT IS INDEED A MAJOR WESTERN INTEREST TO PROMOTE A PEACEFUL OUTCOME IN RHODESIA
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THE UNITED STATES AND THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY ARE JUST AS VITALLY INTERESTED IN THIS OUTCOME AS OURSELVES. SO ARE COUNTRIES LIKE ZAMBIA AND TANZANIA--AND, INDEED, SOUTH AFRICA. SO A LOT IS BOUND UP IN THE BRITISH DECISION WHICH MAY HAVE TO BE TAKEN SHORTLY. TOO MUCH IS AT STAKE FOR THE RISK TO BE TAKEN OF AN INDEPENDENT BRITISH INITIATIVE FAILING THROUGH RASH DECISIONS, NOT THOUGHT THROUGH, MADE UNDER PRESSURE NOW."

ARMSTRONG

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